

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### Whom do you seek?

The gospel accounts demonstrate that people regularly underestimated the power and authority of Jesus. This is especially seen in the way that they tried to arrest Him. The point is well illustrated when Judas came with the Roman cohort, along with officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, to arrest him (John 18). They did not realize what they were about to encounter. The text tells us:

So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" They answer Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He said to them, "I am." And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them. So when He said to them, "I am," they drew back and fell to the ground. (John 18:4-5)

Imagine the scene. They came with weapons, ready to fight the One who had lived so peacefully. They pulled out all the stops to try to bring this One to some kind of "justice," as they saw it. Surely they could not fail again. Yet how could they not get it? How could they not know who Jesus really was? We wonder about this, of course, yet would we have reacted any differently? They were seeking Jesus, but they weren't seeking Jesus as He really was (and is). They were looking for a Jesus who was a fake — a merely human Jesus who made outlandish claims and needed to be silenced forever. They weren't seeking God. They weren't looking at Him in any kind of understanding way. Yet God is who they met in the garden.

What is even more amazing is that the God they encountered in the garden was about to submit Himself to their evil plans, for it was by the hands of godless men that Jesus was put to death (Acts 2:23).

"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know — this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to

death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. (Acts 2:22-24)

Did you notice that last statement? It was impossible for Jesus to be held by the power of death. Hades could not get in the way of God's plans and purposes (Matt 16:18). This is why some of the most powerful words in Scripture are found in these: "He is not here, but He has risen" (Luke 24:6).

"Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives." (Heb. 2:14-15)

Whom do you seek? Who or what exactly are you looking for?

When Thomas missed that first appearance of Jesus to His disciples, he didn't know what exactly he had missed, and he wasn't willing to trust the testimony of his fellow apostles. Yet when Jesus appeared again, Thomas only had one response: "My Lord and My God!" (John 20:28) He was seeking verification of some kind to the claim that Jesus had risen. He found his Lord and God.

The point is often made that you find what you are looking for. However, sometimes we find more than we bargained for. This was certainly the case of those who arrested Jesus. They were looking for a trouble-maker and found the Maker of all creation. The question is, are we seeking God? Even more, are we seeking God in the person of Jesus Christ? Once we come face to face with the risen Savior, will we have the honesty to admit what Thomas confessed? "My Lord and My God!" is still the appropriate response when we finally encounter the risen Lord. Perhaps we can be in awe enough of Him to bow before Him and recognize His power and authority.

We ought to realize now, before we are forced to realize it, that "at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11).

We may be looking for something else, but in the end we will all discover the truth about Jesus: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing" (Rev 5:12).

Again, whom do you seek?

- Doy Moyer

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# Do You REALLY Trust God?

Under normal circumstances most people who profess to believe in God would probably not hesitate in answering the above question with a resounding YES! But what about when life takes us into difficult circumstances?

On April 16, 2017 Robert Godwin Sr., 74, was approached by a stranger on the streets of Cleveland, Ohio. Within seconds not only was Godwin killed but the crime was brazenly streamed live over Facebook. In the aftermath of this shocking crime Anderson Cooper interviewed members of the Godwin family on CNN. At a time in which most people would be focused on retaliation and vengeance, viewers saw something altogether unexpected. Godwin's daughter, Tonya, made this proclamation on national television: "Each one of us forgives the killer ... (my father) taught us about God, how to fear God, how to love God and how to forgive" ([www.huffpost.com](http://www.huffpost.com)).

It is easy to trust God when all is good and life is going our way. But can you fully trust God when your heart is broken, and you feel like your life is collapsing all around you? Hopefully none of us will ever be in the situation that Robert Godwin's family found themselves in, but when we face whatever hardships are bound to come our way, may we always be able to place our unwavering trust in God.

- David Bragg

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## HOW'S YOUR HEARING?

Jesus told Pilate, "I have come into the world, to testify to the truth." (John 18:37). Jesus brought God's plan for the salvation of man into the world. Since Christ is the light of life (John 1:9), the light of the world (John 8:12), the message He brought from heaven is the message of His Father (John 12:49-50); it is the message of eternal life. Such a superior message must be heard by all!

Regarding this important message of light, the Lord said: "So take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him." (Luke 8:18). Do you agree that this is a stern warning about how we listen to the word of God? Could there be a problem with how we receive God's instruction?

It is an absolute must that we give our most serious attention to what the Lord says, most carefully meditating upon it! This is characteristic of truth-searching among those who hunger and thirst for the righteousness of God (Matthew 5:6). This is the case with those

described in Luke 8:15, "the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance." Not everyone with words entering the ear has a good heart (excellently beneficial) who can receive the message with an open, unprejudiced mind (as were the Bereans, Acts 17:10-12). Not everyone with words entering the ear has an honest heart (honorably noble); these are unethical and insincere. Proper hearing is by those with the listed good characteristics who make the commitment to keep it, constantly and steadfastly clinging to it. Their faith is true to what they have learned, and their lives are obedient to heaven's message.

Knowing these things, how would you classify the scribes and Pharisees who closely questioned the Lord Jesus on many subjects while "plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say." (Luke 11:54)? Their motive was to ambush or entrap Him with accusations in an attempt to turn people against Him. Many people today listen to His words to better enable themselves to promote controversy and dispute issues that are unsettling to people. Do we dare argue with the plain teaching in scripture? Do we listen, only to find fault with His words (Mark 12:13)?

Would you think it wise to be the kind of person who would continually hear the words of the Lord over and over, but without conforming to or obeying them? This appears to be the case with those in Athens who heard the preaching of Paul (Acts 17:32). Maybe some of these were hardly listening (cf. Isaiah 40:21). Maybe some of these were listening only to be entertained (Ezekiel 33:31-32). One may hear gladly, but never progress further than this; these remain unconvinced, and there is always something else that will distract and call for their attention. They will never be obedient from the heart without a committed determination to please God (Romans 6:17).

The Christian's determination to live by the words of the Lord Jesus remains delightful, even in the face of the determined effort that must be exerted to be successful. I affirm this in repeated reading of Mark 12:37, noting that "the large crowd enjoyed listening to Him." The multitudes, in contrast to the smaller number of scribes and Pharisees who plotted evil, heard his teaching with pleasure and joy. The King James Version states, "the common people heard him gladly." What the Christian loves about this is the example of others who heard the words of salvation, obeyed them from the heart and became what the Lord Jesus desired of them: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:41, KJV).

The commandments of the eternal God have been made known to all the nations for the purpose of creating the obedience of faith in their lives (Romans 16:26). How do you hear the word of God?

- Gary Smalley

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- \* "If God is your co-pilot, swap seats!"
  - \* "Opportunity may knock once, but temptation bangs on the door forever!"
  - \* "A lot of kneeling will keep you in good standing!"
  - \* "We don't change God's message; His message changes us!"
  - \* "Jesus died for you. Will you live for Him?"
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# ***What Must I Do To Be Saved?***

## **HEAR THE GOSPEL**

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

## **BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST**

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

## **REPENT OF PAST SINS**

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

## **CONFESS CHRIST**

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

## **BE BAPTIZED**

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

## **LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE**

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)